A Serious 22.

EXHORTATION

To the People of

ENGLAND,

To mind their preſent

VISITATION,

It being the DAY of the *Lord's Love* unto Them.

By *Charles Bathurſt.*

Printed in the Year, 1669.

A Serious

EXHORTATION

To the People of

ENGLAND,

Touching their present

VISITATION,

Being the DAY of the Lord's Love unto Them.

By Charles Marbury.

Printed in the Year, 1665.

A Serious Exhortation to the People of England, &c.

Dear Friends, and Country men all,

WHen I seriously consider the present Calm and Quiet, the great Peace and Plenty that is in this Nation, on the one hand; and when I reflect and look back on the late impetuous Storms of Plague, Sword and Fire, that did afflict us on the other; methinks, it calls for more then ordinary praise and thanks to be returned to the Lord. Oh, *Friends, Friends*, retire to the Witness of God in you, and that will give you a true sence of the Mercies of God to you; I cannot, methinks, but look back on this outward Deliverance of this Nation, from those dreadfull Judgments wherewith we were so lately afflicted, the sence whereof is still springing up in me: How did the Plague and Pestilence sweep away thousands, and tens of thousands from this great City, and many other parts and places of this Nation? how many were bereaved of their Children, of their Parents, of their Kindred, of their near and dear Relations? and how near and dear did the sence thereof go to their hearts? But when that Judgment seemed to abate, and go over, how did people begin to be unsensible again, and to harden their hearts again? and as the Psalmist saith of *Israel* of old, *They soon forgat his Works*: But how did the Lord again awaken them with that amazing and stupendious Judgment of the conflagration, and burning of the City (a Judgment, for the greatness, and dreadfulness thereof (I think) without all paralel) the stately Buildings and

costly Structures that were then turned into Ashes, marring all its outward beauty and splendor, and consuming much of the Wealth and Merchandize thereof; this loud Cry of the Lord was again to humble us, and to bring us to hear his Voice, and to answer his Requirings of us, as when he led the *Israelites* of old through the Wilderness, it is said, he did it *to humble them, and to prove them*: Indeed, this Judgment was very terrible, a wonder, nay, an amazement to all the Christian World, so called, to have so great a City so soon destroyed and swallowed up by devouring Flames, notwithstanding all the numberless numbers of the People, with all their Strength, Power, Arts and Engines of the Inhabitants thereof, that could not in the least abate the rage and fury thereof, until the Power of the Lord was seen in setting bounds to the raging thereof, and staying the furious Flames of this devouring Fire; Methinks this second Judgment should quite have allayed all the Pomp and Pride that could be imagined in the hearts or heads of the Spectators, or Sufferers in it; and indeed, no doubt the Rod had its voice, and some were called by it, but soon did the generallity of people, and professors too vaunt and pride themselves out of their former ruins, as if they would dare the Almighty to try another combat with them, so that the Lord might say, as he once did by the Prophet *Amos*, *I have overthrown some of you, as I did* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *and plucht you as brands out of the Fire, and yet you have not returned to me saith the Lord*: Indeed, the sad consequence of this Judgment, accompanied with a third, namely, that dreadfull Naval War, with our neighbouring Nations of *Dutch*, *Danish* and *French* was very terrible, so that almost all hearts seemed to be much astonished, the fears of Fire, and the many accidental Fires which then happened, with the great rumours of the Enemies Power, when approaching

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and drawing neat our own Harbors was very dismal, so that all faces seemed to gather paleness, and every mans loyns to loose, having danger from dispitefull men at home, and potent Enemies abroad, and the Sword devouring many in that Naval conflict; besides the great burden of Taxes which this War procured, caused great consternation of Spirit; so that they that have any memory, or true sence thereof cannot but say, *The dread thereof was beyond the Mouth or Pen of man to declare.* But now after all these Judgments, when there seemed no safety to him that went forth, nor to him that stayed at home; I say, after all these Judgments, and impetuous Storms, to have the bright side of the Cloud to appear; to have Peace and Plenty, Fulness and Quietness, Freedom and Liberty, all spiritual and temporal Blessings accompanied together, and that not attained by any humane might or force, but by the secret Power of the Almighty, to have all fears and storms blown over, and *every man to sit under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree, and no man to rise up to make him afraid:* Methinks it calls for high praises to the Lord, and for every one to answer his requirings of them, to improve the Talent which he hath given every one to profit with, *he hath shewed thee O man what is good, to do Justly, love Mercy and walk humbly with thy God:* O methinks, how can vain men forget this love of the Lord unto them!

Oh, *Friends*, out of my bowels of affection to you that have tasted of this Love of the Lord, in a measure inwardly and outwardly, this love of Christ constrains me to call upon you to retire, and consider your ways and your doings that have not been good, and return to the Lord, *for he it is that hath wounded, and healed, that hath killed and made alive.* Oh, my *Friends*, I cannot but be grieved, and my Life is grieved in me, and my Bowels are pained to see the great Vanity,

Luxury,

Luxury, Pride and Excess that is in the Nation after so great a Deliverance, as if (like *Israel* of old) *To were delivered to do all these Abominations*: Surely, if ye do not return unto the Lord, *He will recover his Corn, his Oyl, his Wool, and Flax of ye again*: Certainly, *He will come upon ye as a Bear robbed of her Whelps*; the Lord hath sent chosen Messengers among you, that have cried loud in your Streets, to bring you down to his Witness in you, *that you may know your Teacher that shall not be removed into a Corner any more*: Oh, Friends, *Let not Wisdom cry at the corners of your Streets, and you stop your ears, charm the Charmer never so wisely*! O now therefore *Hearken, and hear his Reproof, hear, that your Souls may live*; *and be willing and obedient, that so you may eat the good of the Land*; for surely the Lord's Love is great unto you, to give you this glorious Day of Visitation once more, and that in so high and eminent a manner: Oh! do not do as those of old, of whom the Prophet *Nehemiah* complains, *He gave them his good Spirit to instruct them, but they rebelled against it*; indeed great is the rebellion of this Nation at this day: I well know indeed great is the Profession at this time, and many are the Forms, and Ways of Worship that are set up, multitudes of Sacrifices, and many that cry, Lo here, and Lo there, *But what means the lowing of the Oxen, and the bleating of the Sheep*? Where is the Obedience that the Lord requires? Where is the holy Life, and the humble Conversation? may not the Lord [when he stands up to plead and judge the Professors] complain as he doth by the Prophet *Isaiah* in his 3d chapter? Is there not the same Uncharitableness, the same Haughty Carriage and Gaudy Fashions among you, as among those you separate from? surely, I think, it is too obvious to every observing Eye, and therefore the Lord may well send the same punishments, in turning the well set Hair into Baldness,

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in giving Burning instead of Beauty, and instead of a Girdle a Rent, and stain the Glory of all your proud and lofty Imaginations; some indeed there are in whose hearts is a Sincerity and Uprightness towards the Lord, who yet are feeding upon the barren Mountains, who in due time shall be brought to the true Shepherd and right Sheep-fold, where they shall feed and lie down in Peace: Surely now is the day which the Lord by the Prophet spake of, *His Rest shall be Glorious, and upon all their Glory shall be a defence*, and therefore hath the Lord sent forth many a Messenger, whose work hath been to gather you into the Life and Love of God, where you may be kept safe, when Stormes and Tempests shall arise; indeed it is Summer now, but Winter will come again, and storms will come again, and Persecution will come again: Oh, now therefore consider the dealings of the Lord with you! oh, you of this Nation, methinks, you should not forget how wonderfull the Lord hath appeared in our age and time! so as he hath not done in many Ages before; how he suffered a Sword to pass thorow the Land, and caused Peace again; changed the Government, and Governours, emptying from Vessel to Vessel, and still by reason of Transgression, how hath Judgments followed us? that dreadfull Pestilence, and consuming Fire, with the fears that accompanied them, laying dread and terror almost upon all hearts; and now the Lord in tender mercy hath once more visited us again, and that with so much peace and plenty to this great City, so lately much depopulated, and so greatly consumed by the aforesaid Judgments, now again so much erected, so numerously inhabited, and so greatly encreased in Wealth and Merchandise; and above all, so much force and compulsion of Worship, in a manner, for a season laid aside, every man enjoying Freedom: I say, all these things considered, the deep sence and weight of

them lying very heavy upon me, I am constrained to send forth these few Lines, to require you to prize this Love of the Lord to you, and mind this day of your Visitation, which else will soon hasten over you; remember the words of our Saviour, *To whom much is given, much will be required*; and do not spend your time and treasure in Pride and Vanity; let not the voice of the Oppressed, nor cry of the Needy be heard any more; remember the doom of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, Cities seated in a fruitfull soil, remember the Riches of *Tyre*, that abounded in all Wealth and Merchandise, as well as you: nay, *Remember* (saith the Lord) *my Place which was in* Shiloe, *where I set my Name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my People*: The remembrance of these, & many other Examples of God's Judgments for Sin, and for Transgression should be of moment to us; O the weighty consideration of these things! that the Lord should exercise so many dreadfull Judgments in the midst of us, and we remain standing Monuments of his Mercy at this day, that after so great a Storm of dreadfull Judgments in this Nation, so great a calm of Peace and Safety should arise: Oh the true sence of these things might humble us, and make us bow down before the Lord, who hath not left himself without a Witness in every heart and mind! but if yet you will walk contrary to him, (and pass this glorious day of Visitation over) he will walk contrary unto you, and bring greater and severer Judgments upon you for the same; in Testimony whereof is this given forth,

By a Friend of Truth,

Charles Bathurst.

THE END.